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ABSTRACT

As an interim report to the President and the Congress from the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, this narration discusses the population situation in the United States, and outlines the questions being raised about the probable impact of future growth. It is suggested that it is not simply population growth itself that is the issue, but rather the quality of life that can be influenced so fundamentally by population. Statistics and graphs serve to elaborate the problems of this issue. Chapters are entitled: Population in Perspective, The Prospects for Population Change, Population and the Quality of Life, and Policy Issues. Appended material includes public law 91-213 establishing the Commission, sources of data for the report, and research projects and papers of the Commission. Findings and recommendations are to be presented in the final report scheduled for publication in 1972. (BL)

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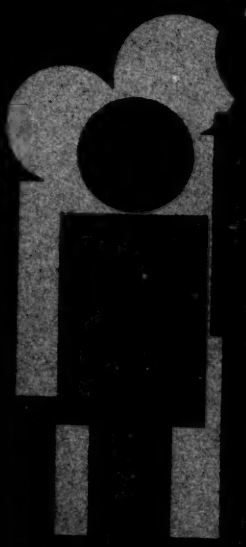
population growth & america's future

an interim report
prepared by the commission
on population growth
and the american future



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1

One of the most serious challenges to human destiny in the last third of this century will be the growth of the population. Whether man's response to that challenge will be a cause for pride or for despair in the year 2000 will depend very much on what we do today. If we now begin our work in an appropriate manner, and if we continue to devote a considerable amount of attention and energy to this problem, then mankind will be able to surmount this challenge as it has surmounted so many during the long march of civilization.

Richard Nixon
July 18, 1969

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an interim report to the president and the congress from the

commission on population growth and the american future

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COMMISSION ON POPULATION GROWTH AND THE AMERICAN FUTURE
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WASHINGTON, D. C. 20506

March 16, 1971

To the President and Congress of the United States:

I have the honor to transmit for your consideration this Interim Report of the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, pursuant to Sec. 8, PL 91-213.

In this report, we discuss the population situation in the United States, and outline the questions we are raising about the probable impact of future growth.

During the coming year, the Commission will continue to gather and assess information on a wide range of population-related issues. The Commission's program of research and public hearings will examine the relationship between population growth and the quality of life in the United States, and the issues that would be involved if the Nation were to develop an explicit policy on population.

We shall present our findings and recommendations in our Final Report a year from now.

Respectfully submitted for the Commission,

John D. Rockefeller 3rd
Chairman

The President
The President of the Senate
The Speaker of the House of Representatives

The Commission on Population Growth and the American Future

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1 population in perspective

The time has come to ask what level of population growth is good for the United States. There was a period when rapid growth made better sense as we sought to settle a continent and build a modern industrial Nation. And there was a period, in the 1930's, when a low birth rate was cause for concern. But these are new times and we have to question old assumptions and make new choices based on what population growth means for the Nation today. Despite the pervasive impact of population growth on every facet of American life, the United States has never developed a deliberate policy on the subject. There is a need today for the Nation to consider population growth explicitly and to formulate policy for the future.

Our population reached 100 million in 1915; it now numbers something over 200 million; the Nation had better get ready for 300 million; it may soon have to decide whether it wants 400 million. Should we look forward to celebrating the arrival of the third and fourth hundred million as we did the second hundred million? Whether or when we reach these totals will depend on what American couples do in the decades just ahead.

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Such large differences in population size result from small differences in family size. For example, if families in the United States have only two children on the average and immigration continues at current levels, our population would still grow to 266 million by the end of the century; if they have three children, the population would reach 321 million by then. One hundred years from now the two-child family would result in a population of 340 million persons; the three-child average would produce nearly a billion.

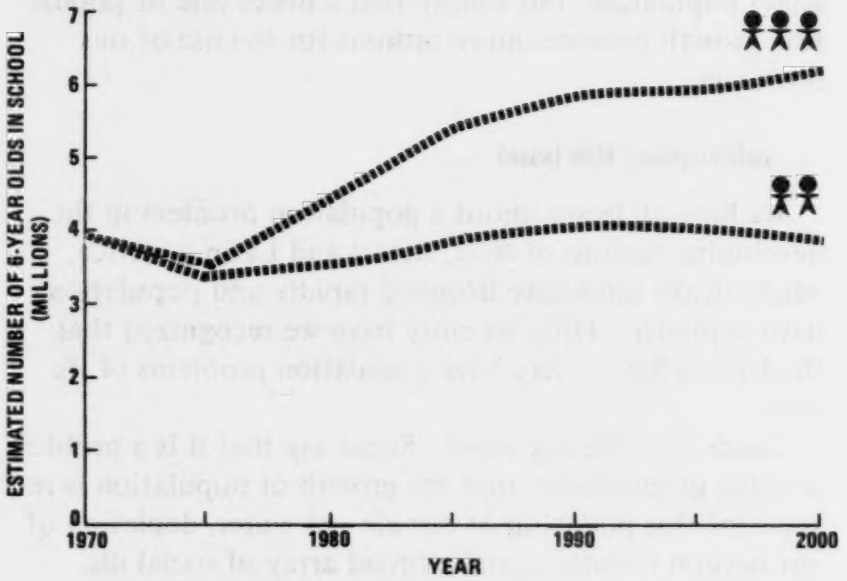
The difference is important not simply because of the numbers but because it bears vitally upon a fundamental question about the Nation's future: Do we wish to continue to invest even more of our resources and those of much of the rest of the world in meeting demands for more services, more classrooms, more hospitals, and more housing as population continues to grow? Or should we concentrate our energies and resources on improving the quality of existing services and extending them to large numbers of our people for whom the "quality of life" still means just getting a square meal?

. . . a difference of one . . .

Small differences in family size will make big differences in the demands placed on our society. That difference of only one child per family over just the next thirty years will have important consequences for the educational system.

If families average three children, in the year 2000 elementary school enrollment will be 50 percent above what it would be if families average only two children. Similarly, secondary school enrollment will be 43 percent higher and college enrollment 34 percent higher. In dollar terms, the three-child family implies that total annual costs of education will be nearly $40 billion more (in 1969 dollars) in the year 2000 than for a population resulting from a two-child family. This would mean a 30

HOW MANY CHILDREN WOULD BE STARTING SCHOOL?
EFFECT OF 3-CHILD FAMILY vs. 2-CHILD FAMILY.



SOURCE FOR ALL CHARTS, SEE APPENDIX A.

Figure 1

percent higher level of educational expenditures per working member of society. An average of three rather than two children will require more than one million extra teachers just to maintain present student-teacher ratios.

In the health field, the three-child family implies an annual cost of $14 billion more in the year 2000 than the two-child family just to maintain present standards. If health costs continue to rise as they have in the past, the difference would exceed $30 billion. If the three-child family is the norm in the year 2000, the economy will have to produce 20 percent more than would be necessary to provide the two-child family with the same standard of living. This could mean a higher level of resource use and environmental pollution.

The importance of these differences in costs is not that the Nation would be unable to meet the demands of a larger population, but simply that a lower rate of population growth provides more options for the use of our resources.

. . . addressing the issue . . .

We have all heard about a population problem in the developing nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, where death rates have dropped rapidly and populations have exploded. Only recently have we recognized that the United States may have population problems of its own.

There are differing views. Some say that it is a problem of crisis proportions—that the growth of population is responsible for pollution of our air and water, depletion of our natural resources, and a broad array of social ills. Others point to recent declines in the birth rate and assert that the problem is disappearing. Still others claim that our problems are caused by the way our population is concentrated in metropolitan areas, by the amounts an affluent people consume and discard, by new products and technologies, or by inequities in access to the better things of life.

Our view, at this stage of our inquiry, is that population growth of the magnitude we have had since World War II has aggravated many of the Nation's problems and made their solution more difficult. The point was stated by President Nixon in his Population Message of July 18, 1969, when he said:

> "I believe that many of our present social problems may be related to the fact that we have had only fifty years in which to accommodate the second hundred million Americans."

And, the longer we delay addressing the issue, the more costly and arduous the task becomes because the popula-

tion—and the number of potential future parents—will have grown that much more in the intervening years. The cumulative nature of population growth requires us to take the long view. The children born in this decade will be parents of most of the children born in the year 2000. What we do now will have real impact then. It is a challenge that Americans have rarely been called upon to face.

We are not saying that population growth continued at current rates portends an immediate crisis for the country. There is little question that the United States has the resources, if it chooses to use them, to meet the demands of a population growing at the current rate as well as to correct various social and economic inequities, as the President's National Goals Research Staff recently indicated. And it is equally true that our social and economic problems would not be solved by the stabilization of population alone. We are simply saying that population growth is important. It makes a difference.

The tension between population and the economy, population and the environment, population and government services, is with us at all times in different forms and degrees. Whether we wish to alter it or to live with it, we cannot afford to ignore it. It is time that population issues were given deliberate, impartial consideration.

This is necessary whether the birth rate is going up or down. Some Japanese leaders are publicly worrying about the low birth rate in their nation. Similar concerns have been voiced by responsible leaders of several eastern European countries. Indeed, if birth rates in the United States were to resume their recent decline, in future years we might be worrying about the same thing.

. . . to confront the problems . . .

In his Population Message to Congress, President Nixon urged the Nation to confront the problems posed by national population growth and to develop means of coping with them. At the President's request, Congress estab-

lished the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future—the first such body ever appointed in the United States—to examine the probable course of population growth and internal migration in the United States between now and the year 2000; to assess the problems this will pose for our government, our economy, and our resources and environment; and to make recommendations on how the Nation can best resolve these problems. (See Appendix C)

A year hence, in our final report, we will present our findings and recommendations. Between now and then, the Commission will be gathering the facts on population and its probable future change, examining how and to what extent this change is likely to affect the quality of life in the United States, conducting public hearings, reviewing the policy alternatives open to us, and deciding which courses to recommend.

It is our purpose in this Interim Report to encourage a rational discourse on population matters among the American people. In the remainder of the report, we outline the population situation in the United States and the issues it poses, the questions we are raising about the probable impact of future population growth and distribution, and how we are going about finding answers to these questions. Finally, the report reviews some of the issues which would be involved if the Nation were to develop an explicit national population policy.

2 the prospects for population change

Every day in the United States an average of almost 10,000 babies are born, about 5,000 persons die, and over 1,000 more persons enter the country than leave. This adds up to a net increase in total population of about 6,000 a day or over two million persons a year.

These population numbers reflect life and death and new opportunity for the individual. For society, the balance of births and deaths and migration is profoundly important; the effects are long range and the consequences of great significance.

Recent Census Bureau figures indicate that if families average three children over the next few decades and immigration continues at present levels, our population will reach 300 million in 1996, only a quarter-century from now. If we average two children, that day will be postponed another 25 years to the year 2021. We are currently reproducing at a rate roughly midway between two and three children, which would bring us to 300 million around the year 2008.

The Census Bureau figures are not intended to be forecasts. The birth rate changed so rapidly in the past few years that last year the Census Bureau had to revise down-

ward the projections it had issued only three years before. So, it would be possible for the Nation to reach 300 million after these dates, or conceivably before. But it appears highly likely that we **will** reach that figure.

It may seem odd, when we have only recently passed the 200 million mark, to be saying that we are fairly well assured of reaching 300 million. Population growth tends to develop its own momentum which makes it difficult to stop, no matter how hard the brakes are applied. Even if immigration from abroad ceased and families had only two children on the average—just enough to replace themselves—our population would continue to grow until the year 2037, when it would be a third larger than it is now.

This momentum is the legacy of past population growth. Thirty years ago, in 1940, we had a population of 132 million people. After all the births, deaths and new immigrants over the following 30 years were balanced out, by 1970 we had a population of 204 million and a net gain of 72 million. Because of the baby boom, the number of persons now moving into the childbearing ages is much larger than previous generations of parents. In 1975 there will be 5½ million more people in the prime childbearing ages of 20 to 29 than there were last year. By 1985, the figure will have jumped still another 5½ million. This will exert strong pressure toward increasing the number of births.

Right now about 80 percent of our annual population growth results from natural increase—the amount by which births exceed deaths. About 20 percent of our current growth is due to net immigration; the number has been averaging about 400,000 annually. Historically speaking, that is not many. In the years just before World War I, the figures ran to twice that, at a time when the United States had less than half the number of people it has now.

Even so, the long-term effects of immigration are large. This is partly because most immigrants enter the country

in young adulthood, at an age when their childbearing is at its peak. If the average family (including immigrants) had two children, and immigration continued at 400,000 per year, the survivors and descendants of immigrants in the next 30 years would number 16 million in the year 2000, and would have accounted for one-fourth of the total population increase during that period. Over the next 100 years immigrants and their descendants would account for nearly half of the increase in population from 204 to 340 million.

. . . a fourth hundred million? . . .

If it seems odd to be thinking now about our third hundred million, it may seem absurd to raise the question of a fourth hundred million. However, whether we add that fourth hundred million may be determined by what Americans do about family size and population in the next couple of decades.

The children born in this decade will be parents in the year 2000, and they will contribute most of the births occurring in that year. So the number of births thirty years hence depends heavily on the number of children born in the 1970's and the reproductive patterns they follow when they come of age.

An average of three children per family in the future, as unlikely as that appears at the moment, would give us a population of 400 million in the year 2014, less than a half-century away. With an average of two children, we could forget about the fourth hundred million if immigration were not a factor.

When we speak of two or three-child families we are talking about averages which can be made up by many possible combinations of families of different sizes, ranging from childless couples to those with many children.

A vocal group of concerned citizens is calling for population growth to stop immediately. While there are a variety of paths to ultimate zero growth, none of the feasible

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WILL THE U.S. ADD A FOURTH 100 MILLION TO ITS POPULATION?
EFFECT OF 3-CHILD FAMILY vs. 2-CHILD FAMILY.

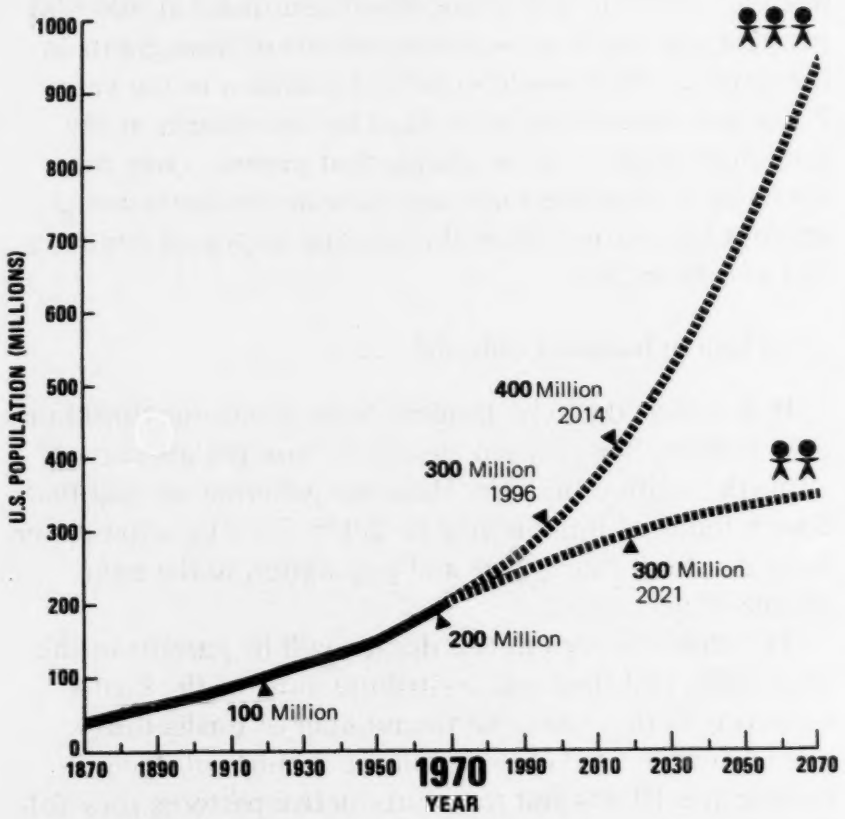


Figure 2

paths would achieve it immediately. Our past rapid growth has given us so many young couples that they would have to limit their childbearing to an average of only about one child to produce the number of births consistent with immediate zero growth. Ten years from now, the population under 10 years old would be only 43 percent of what it now is, with disruptive effects on the school system and ultimately on the number of persons

entering the labor force. Thereafter, a constant total population could be maintained only if this small generation in turn had two children and their grandchildren had nearly three children on the average. And then the process would again have to reverse, so that the overall effect for many years would be that of an accordion-like mechanism requiring continuous expansion and contraction.

We doubt that such consequences are intended by the advocates of immediate zero population growth.

. . . two-thirds of our people . . .

The growth of population in the United States has been interwoven with the movement of our people across the face of the land.

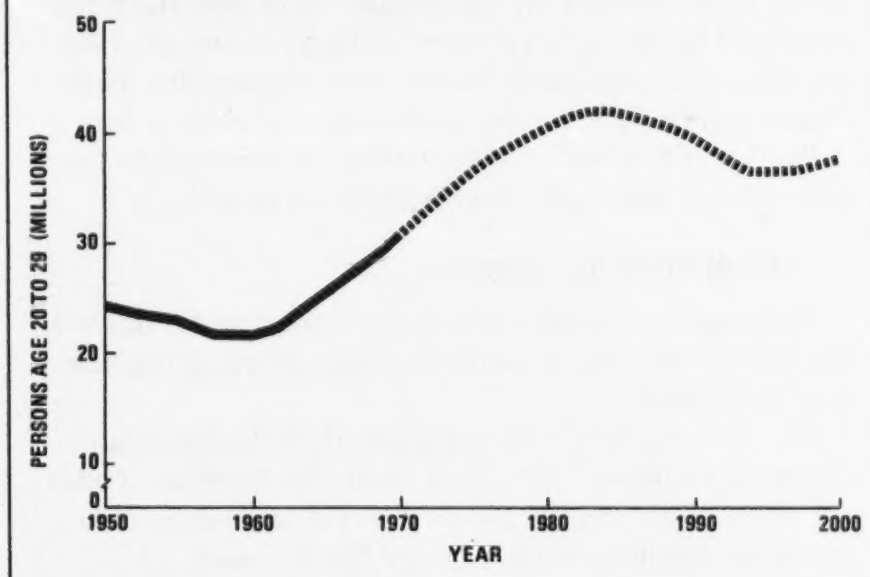
In 1790, the four million people of the United States occupied a narrow coastal area along the Atlantic. Today, one-third of our people live west of the Mississippi, and our most populous State is on the Pacific coast.

When the United States was formed, 95 percent of our people were rural, living on farms and in towns and villages. Today, over two-thirds of our people live in metropolitan areas and many more live in cities and towns outside metropolitan areas.

In the 1960's more than three-fourths of our Nation's growth occurred in metropolitan areas, with the suburbs absorbing most of it. Suburbanites now outnumber those living in central cities. The farm population dropped from 15 to 10 million, and about one-half of the Nation's three thousand counties lost population. Another one-fourth of the counties had slow growth rates because more people moved out than moved in. Migration patterns continued from mid-country out to coastal areas.

In contemporary discussion of population growth and its effects, we hear the view that the population problems of our society are caused more by the concentration of population in large urban areas than by the size and growth of the total population; that, therefore, we should

AN AVERAGE OF 2 CHILDREN PER FAMILY WOULD SLOW POPULATION GROWTH, BUT WOULD NOT STOP IT SOON BECAUSE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE OF CHILDBEARING AGE IS INCREASING...



...SO EVEN IF FAMILY SIZE DROPS TO A 2-CHILD AVERAGE...

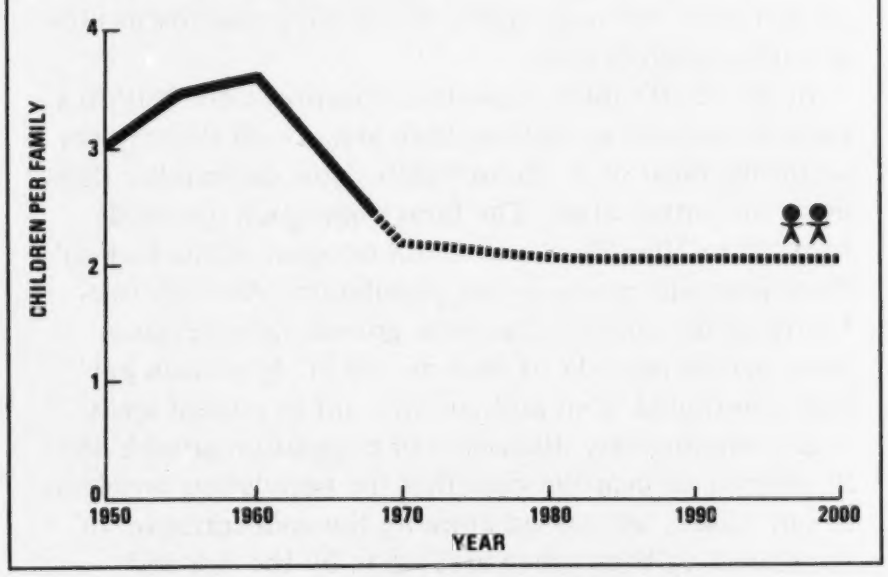
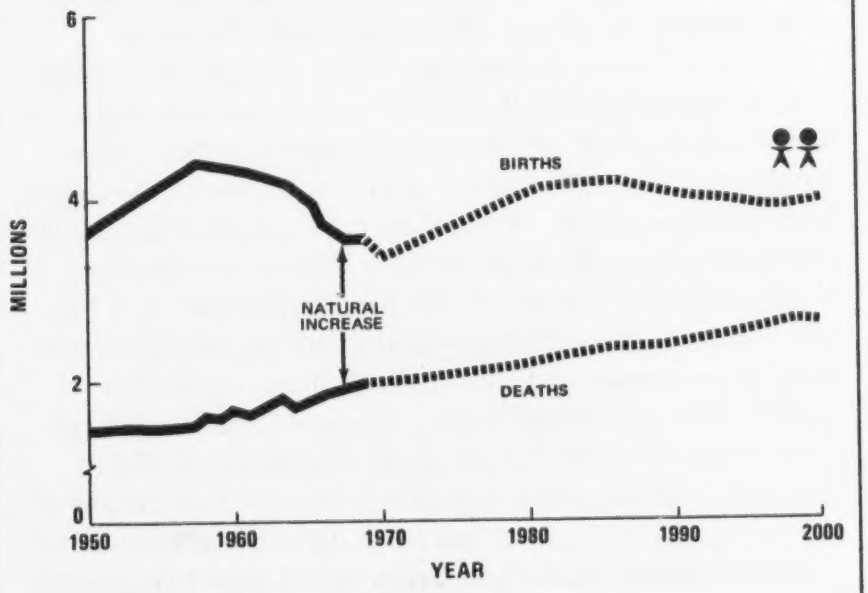


Figure 3

...THE RESULTING BIRTHS WILL CONTINUE TO EXCEED DEATHS FOR THE REST OF THIS CENTURY...



...SO THE POPULATION WILL STILL BE GROWING IN THE YEAR 2000, BUT AT A DECREASING RATE.

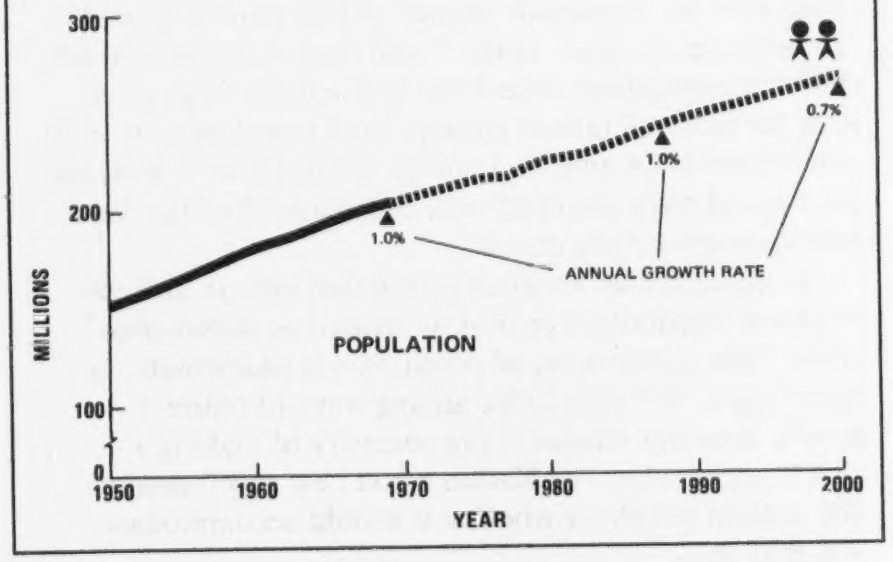


Figure 3 continued

be worried less about the number of people in the United States than about the way they are distributed geographically; and that government efforts should be devoted to achieving greater geographical dispersion of growth.

The issue is not that simple. Many of our largest cities have actually lost population. It is their suburbs and metropolitan areas of intermediate size that have grown rapidly in the past decade. Furthermore, we already are a metropolitan people. Two of every three Americans now live in metropolitan areas and this trend is continuing. This means that the size of the total population and the size of the metropolitan population are becoming increasingly synonymous and that metropolitan population growth will increasingly reflect changes in national birth rates. Over the past decade alone, 70 percent of the growth of metropolitan population occurred as a result of natural increase. If there had been no net migration at all to metropolitan areas, these areas would have experienced most of their growth anyway.

The decline of many rural counties is often cited as cause for concern and indeed it does create many problems. But the numerical impact of this process should not be overestimated. If the 1,100 rural counties that declined in population since 1960 had actually kept pace with the national rate of growth, their population in 1970 would have been only two million greater than it was, and they would have absorbed only nine percent of the Nation's growth for the decade.

The point is that national population growth and geographical distribution cannot be treated as an either-or affair. The distribution of population is problematic in many ways. But the choice among ways to redirect growth does not eliminate the necessity of making a choice about when the Nation could best accommodate 300 million people or whether it should accommodate 400 million.

. . . to know where we are going . . .

Since knowing where we are and have been helps us to know where we are going, the Commission is using the results of the 1970 Census and earlier censuses to gain an understanding of the growth, transformation and redistribution of the population of the United States in this century.

The Commission's research on prospects for population growth includes projections of population and population characteristics and studies of the importance of unwanted childbearing, the demographic impact of immigration, abortion, voluntary sterilization and family planning programs, the future of contraceptive technology, and the level of popular education about population.

With regard to the distribution of population, the Commission is preparing projections of regional and metropolitan growth, examining the implications of economic changes for redistribution of population, studying the ways in which distribution patterns compound national problems, and investigating the factors which influence individual decisions to move.

Appendix B lists the Commission's research projects.

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population and the quality of life 3

Given a likely population of 300 million sooner or later, the questions before us are: Is it in the national interest to reach that level later rather than sooner? What demands are implied by the growth that is to be expected? And, what difference will it make whether we grow to 400 million after that?

Much discussion these days implies that population growth is bad, just as not very long ago one heard, from a different point of view, that it was good. No such simple judgments can be made. To consider population growth or concentration as the root cause of our Nation's social and environmental ills is clearly simplistic. Such an interpretation confuses how things are done with how many people are doing them. For example, rapidly rising levels of per capita consumption, and technological mismanagement, appear to contribute more to environmental pollution than does a gradual rise in total population.

More importantly, population growth matters not in its own right but because of its potential impact on many values that Americans hold about our environment and resources, our economy, our government and our social order. The question is: What does population growth have to do with such values and with the systems necessary for their achievement?

. . . resources and the environment . . .

There is little reason to believe that population growth will cause food shortages in the United States, but serious questions have been raised about the effects of continued population growth on our own and the world's resources, and on the pollution of our land, air and water. Even though population growth is not the primary cause of environmental deterioration, it may well magnify problems arising from the way we use our resources and technology.

At our present level of consumption, a continually growing population makes demands upon many resources, some of which are in scarce supply. There is a question whether continued growth will cause us to exhaust some important resources, or whether the market system, with a dynamic economy, can develop substitutes for resources in short supply. For some resources, such as wilderness, there are no substitutes. Economists and ecologists have been enlisted by the Commission to determine the effects on the environment of population growth, of technological change and of changes in demand resulting from greater affluence.

To the extent that environmental problems are aggravated by population growth, it is important to determine the environmental implications of the way in which our population is distributed—the effects of local population concentration as well as national growth.

Some contend that the country could easily accommodate more people if our population were spread more evenly. It is not how many people we have, they say, but how they are distributed across the Nation. This is only a partial answer. Clearly, some of our urban problems are due to high concentrations and poor planning. On the other hand, people consume resources wherever they live. Whether in New York City or a small town in the midwest, they still drive an automobile fabricated of steel produced in Pittsburgh using coal mined in West Virginia. In the

process, the air of Pittsburgh is polluted by smoke and the scenery of West Virginia by strip mining. Wherever Americans live, they make huge demands on the Nation's and the world's resources and ecological systems.

People in small towns can despoil their rivers and air just as people in New York have done. A large city might actually be better able to afford ecologically sound solutions to many environmental problems. So simply redistributing the population might not solve many of the population-related problems we face.

Moreover a large population such as ours might not be able to live at its present standard of consumption without high concentrations of people and economic activity. We could not drastically alter distribution patterns without radically altering our way of life. Even so, it may be desirable to slow or stop the growth of very large metropolitan areas. And as we have said, it would be very difficult to do this without slowing the growth of the total population.

. . . the economy . . .

There are several points of view on how different rates of population growth might affect the economy of this country. In the past, some predicted that declining population growth would cause economic stagnation, unemployment, and a lower standard of living. Some contemporary observers maintain that a slower rate of population growth would increase the Nation's prosperity while reducing the costs associated with growth. Still others note that our economy is flexible and has shown many times that it can adjust to changes in demand. They suggest that with proper economic policies the rate of population growth is largely irrelevant to national economic prosperity.

Regardless of the effects of population change on the total economy, it is clear that some industries and businesses will gain and others will suffer as a result of chang-

ing growth rates and shifts in age composition. Various adjustments within the economy will be necessary, as is always the situation with changes in population growth, and we need to know what adjustments are likely to be required.

In addition to affecting the demands for different products, population growth also affects production in other ways. Most importantly, the number of births ultimately affects the size of the labor force and its age composition.

The effect of population growth on various private and public sectors of the economy is being investigated. Some industries with important components in the public sector such as education, health, housing and transportation, are strongly affected by population growth and redistribution. The public expenditures that will be required to accommodate expected growth in the next 30 years are being assessed. Changes in population growth rates can seriously affect certain private sectors of the economy whose markets are geared to particular age groups. Some industries, such as those in children's markets, would be affected very quickly by reduced rates of growth; others would be affected more slowly.

Continued population increase has implications for the delivery of certain social services beyond simply their pocketbook costs. In some fields, further growth may require considerable changes in methods of delivery just to maintain adequate service levels.

For example, even if money were no problem, various constraints affect health care. It is difficult to increase the rate at which doctors are produced. The training is long, difficult, and expensive. Good medical schools require costly equipment and highly skilled faculties commanding top salaries. Because of long training and internship requirements, decisions that will affect the future supply of physicians must be made years in advance. It may also be difficult to expand adequately the supply of nurses and trained technicians. Higher rates of popula-

tion growth magnify burdens on personnel in short supply, which could lead to further depersonalization of medical care. If health care has deteriorated because of inadequate facilities and overworked personnel, higher rates of population growth can make these problems more difficult to solve. In addition to growth, the increasing concentration of people and medical facilities in metropolitan areas has resulted in some serious imbalances of population and medical services.

. . . government . . .

What are the governmental and political implications of population growth, over and above the costs of public services? Our analysis is concentrated on the possible impact of population growth on the quality of government in the United States in the coming decades, and upon the individual's participation as a citizen.

At the local level, the influence of population growth upon the quality of government seems clear. The quality of metropolitan government is likely to depend on the rapidity of population growth and on the number of different governments attempting to meet public service needs. For example, where court dockets are heavily crowded, justice is not likely to flow in the same fashion as where they are not.

Much of our research effort on the implications of population growth for local government concerns metropolitan areas, where most of our people now live. We are considering the increasing complexity and layering of local government generally found in such areas, the differences between cities and suburbs with regard to public service needs and the resources to meet them, and the problems of governmental response to future expansion of metropolitan areas.

In studying the effects of population growth on Federal and State government there is less to rely on than at the local level. We hope to open several new areas of

inquiry, such as the effects of growth on the role of legislators, on the output of State legislatures, and on the ability of the Nation to unite around a national issue.

There is also a range of questions about the effects of population growth and movement on how individuals participate as citizens. The political attitudes of those who migrate from areas of rural poverty to urban ghettos are not likely to remain the same, nor are their expectations of governmental services. The same is likely to be true of those who move to the suburbs. Place of residence—and hence the relative growth of different areas—may make a profound difference in political attitudes and behavior.

For centuries the size of population and national security have been connected in the popular mind. What is the relationship between population and national security in the modern, technological society? How is this relationship affected by the geographical distribution of the population?

. . . society . . .

The Commission is examining the future of the family in the United States as reproduction comes increasingly under voluntary control. In what ways will the family of the future differ from the family of today? What are the implications for the health and development of children if family size diminishes?

Changes in family size will have far-reaching significance for a variety of social processes, not the least of which is the role of women in our society. Reductions in family size imply that women will spend less time in childbearing and child rearing activities and thus have more time available for work on other interests. Basically, the effect of such a change would be to increase the options available to women; one such option would be to devote more time to fewer children, perhaps improving the quality of parenthood. We are examining the effects of changing birth rates on the size of the female labor

force, opportunities for women to have careers, and greater equality and participation of women in the affairs of the society. And, we are looking at the other side of the coin, the extent to which current levels of childbearing—wanted as well as unwanted births—result from the relatively limited range of roles many women occupy.

Some of the implications of the cessation of population growth for society are being explored. A few other nations that have come close to stabilizing population might serve as models of the future, although cultural differences make such inferences precarious. Certainly one demographic consequence of the decline of the birth rate is the aging of the population. In a population where births equal deaths, at the low levels of mortality prevailing in the United States, the proportion of people over 60 would be the same as that under 15 and the average age of the population would be 37 rather than 28 as at present. The implications of such a difference for rates of social change and opportunities for advancement must be examined.

At local levels such situations can be seen in places that have lost population. The emptying out of rural areas has meant a loss of young adults and a decline in the kinds and quality of services available. The impact of rural-urban migration on those who stay behind and on the communities in which they live is being examined. We are also evaluating the advantages and disadvantages to those who migrate to urban centers and the extent to which rural migrants contribute to the problems of urban areas.

In sum, what are commonly referred to as population problems can be viewed more profitably as environmental, economic, political and social problems that are aggravated by population growth and density. The closest thing to a "population problem" in the pure sense is the speculation that increases in the sheer density of numbers have undesirable effects on social behavior. We regard

population growth, however, as an intensifier or multiplier of many problems impairing the quality of life in the United States.

policy issues 4

The Commission is devoting its second year to a detailed examination of the probable course of population growth and distribution and their environmental, economic, political and social implications. The aim is to determine what population prospects inevitably must be accommodated in the short run, and what kind of national population policy is desirable now for the long run. The concerns of overriding importance are whether population stabilization and redistribution of the population are desirable.

The Commission views population policy not as an end in itself but as a means to facilitate the achievement of other social goals desirable in their own right. Such goals would include improvements in the status of women, in the socioeconomic conditions of disadvantaged minorities, and in the health and opportunities of children born because they were wanted, as well as the easing of pressures on our resources and physical environment, health and educational facilities, and the problems of our cities.

The content of a population policy would not be immutable, but would need to be adjusted over time in the light of emerging developments, increased knowledge, and

32LS

changing attitudes of both policymakers and the general public. Thus, the Commission sees national population policy as an evolving rather than a static instrumentality.

. . . freely to choose . . .

A key consideration for population policy is the current level of unwanted childbearing. This information is necessary to determine how much movement toward the cessation of population growth might ultimately result simply from preventing unwanted births. The sum of individuals' real preferences may in fact coincide with the welfare of society as a whole. There is some evidence (from the 1965 National Fertility Study) that the elimination of unwanted births would result in fertility levels ultimately commensurate with near-zero growth. If this conclusion is valid for 1970 (the 1970 National Fertility Study now underway will provide the basis for such a judgment), the policy implications can hardly be overestimated because the national objective could be attained by enabling individuals to achieve their own preferences.

Estimates made in 1965, based on married women's own reports about their childbearing experience, indicated that one-third of the married couples who did not intend to have any more children already had at least one unwanted child. In the period 1960-65 nearly 20 percent of all live births were reported as unwanted by their parents. Only one-fourth of all parents claimed to have been completely successful in preventing both unwanted and unplanned pregnancies.

The 20 percent of births reported as unwanted by their parents represent nearly five million children born between 1960 and 1965 who theoretically would never have been born if their parents' desires had prevailed. Fortunately many of these unwanted pregnancies and births become wanted children. But many do not.

Over and above the demographic significance of current levels of unwanted births, are the serious costs for

HOW MANY BIRTHS ARE UNWANTED?
ONE FIFTH OF ALL U.S. BIRTHS, 1960-65, WERE UNWANTED.

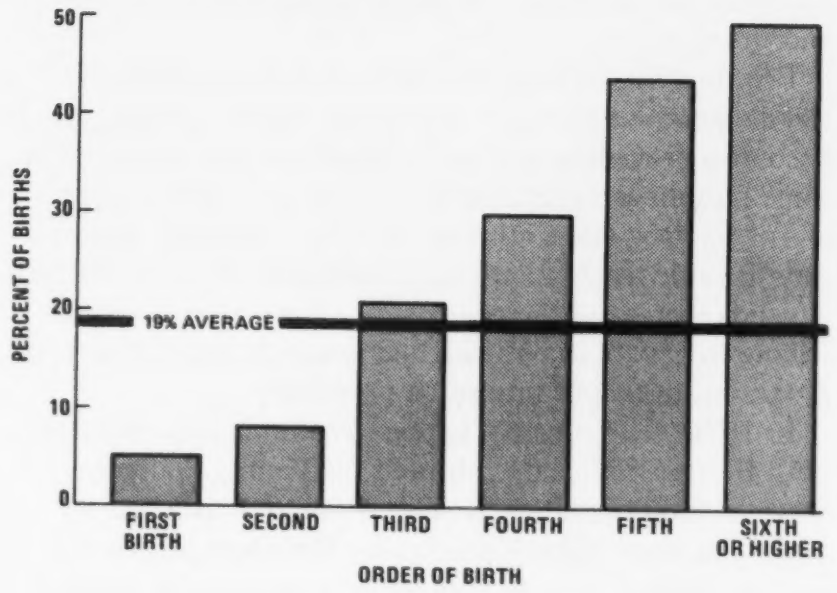

Figure 4

both individuals and society. For many, it means poor prospects for employment and limited opportunities for themselves and their children. For others, the costs are measured in increased family stress and unhappiness, altered life plans, and less time and attention for each child. Unwanted pregnancy sets off a chain of events which acutely forecloses the life-chances of some young people; it leads to dropping out of school, precipitous marriage or an out-of-wedlock birth. Unwanted childbearing is associated with serious health consequences such as increased incidence of prematurity, mental retardation, infant and maternal mortality, and physical and emotional neglect and abuse.

While the incidence—and the consequences—of unwanted births are especially acute among low-income

couples, it would be erroneous to regard the problem as one associated only with poverty. Couples in all socio-economic groups have unwanted pregnancies and experience its costs.

Fortunately, unwanted childbearing is a problem we can do something about. Voluntary family planning has become a prevailing pattern in American life, practiced in some fashion at some time by almost all couples, regardless of income, class, religion, or color. Whether Americans are able freely to choose if and when to have children depends largely on the priority which we as a society are willing to devote to policies, and research and educational programs, to reduce unwanted pregnancy.

In 1970, the Congress, by overwhelming majorities of both House and Senate, adopted the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-572), a measure signed into law by President Nixon this past December. The Act encourages the birth of wanted children and assists couples in preventing unwanted conception. The Commission endorses this significant advance toward the reduction of unwanted childbearing, and believes that this policy should be implemented promptly.

We shall return to this question in our final report, to estimate the level of governmental and private resources—financial, manpower and institutional—which would be necessary for a comprehensive national effort. We are also examining State laws still in force which impede the dissemination of family planning services to certain classes of individuals, and the impact of other policies and programs on the opportunity for couples to secure modern family planning services.

. . . not an easy task . . .

If it turns out that the prevention of unwanted births should be the main target of a growth policy, the goal would be to maximize popular information and under-

standing about how to control fertility, and to accelerate the development of more effective techniques and facilities for limiting childbearing. This will involve the Commission in further considerations of family planning services and education, contraceptive technology, adoption and abortion. These all pose moral and ethical complexities which the Commission is considering.

On the other hand, if population stabilization is desirable and its achievement would require more than eliminating unwanted childbearing, then additional measures can be considered, such as changes in tax laws, the elimination of pro-natalist laws and programs, and educational programs. Some of the policy issues that would then be involved are much more difficult and potentially more controversial than those related to the prevention of unwanted childbearing. It would not be an easy task to develop acceptable measures that would lead to a slowing and eventual end of population growth. The best kind of national population policy would be one that serves the general welfare by promoting informed individual choice.

One obvious and fundamental change desirable in its own right, quite aside from its demographic impact, is to increase the opportunities for women to pursue activities other than exclusively domestic and childbearing roles. As the experience of other countries indicates, when women are able to work, birth rates decline.

As we have seen, population growth is also affected significantly by immigration. Should the volume of immigration be reduced? The historical role played by immigration in the growth of this country and our tradition as an open society make this question especially disturbing.

The issues with regard to the distribution of the population arise from the transition of the United States from an agrarian to an industrial and service economy and from a rural to a metropolitan way of life. The Commission seeks to identify the major stress points in this transition—

stresses generated in the process of regional redistribution, metropolitan growth, the rapid expansion of suburbs and the depopulation of large areas of the country.

If it appears desirable to redirect growth, it will be important to know how this might be done. The Commission is studying internal migration and the characteristics of migrants, to find out at what stages in their career and life-cycle people might be responsive to incentives to move or stay.

A principal question is the role that Federal and State governments play in population affairs. Although the Federal government does not have an explicit, comprehensive population distribution policy, many of its policies, programs and statutes seem to have an impact on population distribution incidental to their main objectives. This inadvertent impact may be seen, for example, not only in the Federal Interstate Highway System, but also in the Federal Housing Administration program and federal procurement policies. Others, such as the Economic Development Administration, the New Communities Act and the urban renewal program, are designed in part to redirect growth.

We also have many laws directly or indirectly affecting the growth of population, such as those governing immigration, marriage, divorce, contraception and abortion, which require examination.

Basic to all population policy questions are the underlying legal, ethical and political issues. Constitutionality does not guarantee ethical acceptability, and Americans support a broad variety of ethical views that must be taken into account in any formulation of policy.

This, then, is the way the Commission views its task. We do not take future population trends as inevitable. We believe that there are short-run population trends already in process that simply must be accommodated, but that the longer-run future hangs in the balance. And it is not simply population growth itself that is the issue, but rather

the quality of life that can be influenced so fundamentally by population. We have the challenge, and indeed the responsibility, to prepare for the future of coming generations of Americans.

appendix a

sources of data

The figures on future population in this report are based on the Census Bureau's *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 448, "Projections of the Population of the United States, by Age and Sex (Interim Revisions): 1970 to 2020," and unpublished extensions of these projections.

The Census Series B projection is used here to show how the population would grow if families had an average of 3 children. The Census Series E projection is used to show population growth if the average were 2 children per family.

Both Census series assume that net immigration to the United States will continue at recent levels of about 400,000 per year. Both assume a slight increase of about 1½ years in the average expectation of life between now and the year 2000. They differ in what they assume about the rate of childbearing.

Series B assumes that in the future women will be giving birth at an "ultimate" rate which works out to an average of 3.1 children per woman over her lifetime. The transition from the 1968 rate of 2.5 to the "ultimate" future rate is not instantaneous in the projections, but most of the transition is assumed to occur by 1980.

The 3.1 figure is an average for all women, regardless of marital status. In the present-day United States almost all women (95%) marry at some time in their lives, and many of those who do not are exposed to the possibility of childbearing. So the Series B rate of childbearing represents a reasonable approximation to an average family size of 3 children.

Census Series E assumes an ultimate rate of childbearing that works out to an average of 2.1 children per woman over a lifetime. This is the rate at which the parental generation would exactly replace itself. The extra .1 allows for mortality between birth and the average age of mothers at childbearing, and for the fact that boy babies slightly outnumber girl babies.

Different generations born in the twentieth century have reproduced at widely varying average levels, some exceeding three children (as did the women born in 1930-1935) and some approaching two (as did women who were born in 1905-1910). The fact that major groups in our modern history have reproduced at each of these levels lends credibility to projections based on either of these averages.

The sources of data for charts in this report are as follows:

Figure 1

Data are unpublished Census Bureau projections of the number of 6-year-olds enrolled in school each fall. The enrollment rate, or proportion of the 6-year-olds enrolled in school, is assumed to increase from 98.5 percent in 1970 to 99.6 percent in 2000. This assumption is compatible with the trends evident in the enrollment rates since 1950.

The projected numbers of 6-year-olds to which the enrollment rates are applied are consistent with Series B and E as published in the U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 448.

Figure 2

Estimates of the total population, 1870 to 1900, are from U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957*. Estimates of the total population, 1900 to 1959, are from the U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 311.

Estimates and projections of the total population, 1960 to 2020, are from the U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports,* Series P-25, No. 448. Projections of the total population beyond 2020 are unpublished extensions of these projections.

Figure 3

Estimates of the population 20 to 29 years of age, 1950 to 1967, are from U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 311, No. 321, and No. 385.

Estimates of births, deaths, and total population from 1950 to 1960 are from the U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 442.

Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 448 is the source of estimates and projections of the population 20 to 29 years of age from 1969 to 2000, the total fertility rate (termed "average number of children per family" in this report) from 1950 to 2000, births and deaths from 1961 to 1991, and total population from 1960 to 2000. Data on births and deaths beyond 1991 are from unpublished Census Bureau projections.

Figure 4

Data on unwanted childbearing are from L. Bumpass and C. F. Westoff, "The 'Perfect Contraceptive' Population," *Science*, 169: 1177-1182, September 1970.

appendix b

research projects and papers of the commission

The Commission plans to publish the results of its research in 1972.

projections of population growth, characteristics, and distribution

Projections to the year 2000 of the:

- **Population of the United States**
- **Nonwhite population**
- **Number of persons enrolled in school**
- **Number of households**
- **Income distribution of families**
- **Population of each State**
- **Components of metropolitan/nonmetropolitan population growth.**

Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce

Projected labor force: 1970 to 2000.

Denis F. Johnston, Bureau of Labor Statistics in cooperation with Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce

Future expansion of metropolitan areas, and their projected population: 1970 to 2000.

Jerome Pickard, Appalachian Regional Commission and Urban Land Institute

analysis of births, deaths, immigration and internal migration

Growth, transformation, and redistribution of United States population in the 20th century.
Irene B. Taeuber, Princeton University and Conrad Taeuber, Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce
Demographic significance of unwanted fertility in the United States: 1970.
Charles F. Westoff, and Norman B. Ryder, Princeton University
Illegitimacy in the United States.
Phillips Cutright, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Teen-age contraceptive practice and pregnancy in the United States.
John Kantner and Melvin Zelnik, The Johns Hopkins University
Demographic significance of the legalization of abortion.
Attitudes in the United States toward abortion.
Christopher Tietze, M.D., The Population Council
Demographic significance of adoption.
Staff
Future course of fertility in the United States.
Norman B. Ryder, Princeton University
Foreign experience with replacement levels of fertility.
Michael S. Teitelbaum, Princeton University
Demographic paths to population stabilization.
Ansley J. Coale, Princeton University
Demographic significance of immigration.
Richard Irwin, Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce
Migration studies, incorporating:

- **Dimensions of the population problem in the United States**
- **The migration process**
- **Disparities between individual and collective consequences of population movement**
- **Impact of immigration on the spatial distribution of population in the United States.**

Peter Morrison, RAND Corporation
Growth of the rural population.
Calvin Beale, U. S. Department of Agriculture
Issues in population redistribution.
Everett S. Lee, University of Georgia

economic research

Impact of future population growth and internal migration on demands for health, education, transportation and welfare services.
RAND Corporation
Impact of future population growth and internal migration on demands for housing.
Staff
The effects of alternative patterns of future population growth for the national economy: four views.
Allen C. Kelley, University of Wisconsin
Harvey Leibenstein, Harvard University
Edmund S. Phelps, University of Pennsylvania
Joseph J. Spengler, Duke University
Critiques of the four views.
Richard A. Easterlin, University of Pennsylvania
Steven Enke, G.E. TEMPO Corporation
Robert Dorfman, Harvard University
Warren C. Robinson, Pennsylvania State University
Equity and welfare consideration in population policy.
Paul Demeny, East-West Center, University of Hawaii
Pro-natalist influences in federal government fiscal policies.
Elliott R. Morss, Private Consultant
Costs of children.
Staff
Projections of gross national product and related variables for different population projections.
Office of Business Economics, Department of Commerce

In addition to the projects listed above, the Commission hopes to develop research on the effects of population growth on specific industries, and the changing functions of cities and the implications for population redistribution.

environmental research

Effects of changes in population growth and distribution on resource adequacy and on the quality of the environment. Among the specific areas to be covered are the effects of population growth and redistribution on:

- **The adequacy of major resource supplies**
- **The adequacy of recreation facilities**
- **Environmental pollution**
- **The ecological consequences of resource use and pollution.**

Resources for the Future, Inc.

Population, resources and environment.

Paul R. Ehrlich, Stanford University

Population, consumption, technology, and the environment.

Barry Commoner, Washington University at St. Louis

Earth's carrying capacity for people and how this constrains our choices.

Preston Cloud, University of California, Santa Barbara

political & governmental research

The impact of population changes upon the representational and policy-making roles of congressmen and senators.

Robert L. Chartrand, Library of Congress

Population futures in legislative apportionment.

Richard Lehne, Rutgers University

Population and the international system: some implications for United States policy and planning.

Robert C. North, Stanford University

Population changes and state government.
John G. Grumm, Wesleyan University
Metropolitan growth and governmental fragmentation.
Allen D. Manvel
The reciprocal impacts of population distribution and metropolitan government.
Michael N. Danielson, Princeton University
Adjustment of local government service levels to population change.
Robert F. Drury

In addition to the projects listed above, the Commission hopes to develop research on several additional topics. These include the impact of population changes upon the administration of justice, national security, and the future of the federal system.

social research

Socio-economic differences in mortality.
Evelyn Kitagawa, University of Chicago
Pro-natalist pressures in the United States.
Judith Blake Davis, University of California, Berkeley
Occupational costs and benefits of immigration.
Judith Fortney, Duke University
The social aspects of a stationary population.
Lincoln H. Day, United Nations
Changing status of American women.
Suzanne Keller, Princeton University
The family and population policy, with special reference to the United States.
Kingsley Davis, University of California, Berkeley
Social-psychological implications of population density.
Jonathan Freedman, Columbia University

Economic and social impact of rural depopulation: A case study.
W. LaMar Bollinger, College of Idaho

In addition to the projects listed above, the Commission hopes to develop research on fertility and women in the labor force.

research on education and information programs

Population education in the United States.
Stephen Viederman, The Population Council
Family planning education.
Sol Gordon, Syracuse University
Citizen attitudes toward population growth, distribution and policy.
Staff
Supply and demand for family planning services in the United States.
Frederick S. Jaffe, Planned Parenthood-World Population
Directions of contraceptive research.
Sheldon J. Segal, The Population Council
American population, family size, community preferences as idealized by American television.
Richard Heffner Associates, Inc.

policy research

Congressional-executive relations in the formation of explicit population policy.
Phyllis T. Piotrow, The Johns Hopkins University
Historical development of values in the American political-legal tradition bearing on population growth and distribution.
Peter Brown and Institute of Society, Ethics and the Life Sciences
Present and future American ethical norms as limits upon possible population policies.
Institute of Society, Ethics, and the Life Sciences
Population policy-making and the constitution.
Arthur S. Miller, National Law Center, The George Washington University

Guarding against unintended consequences of possible population policies.
Theodore J. Lowi, University of Chicago

In addition to the projects listed above, the Commission hopes to develop research on existing laws on contraception, sterilization and abortion; population distribution effects resulting from federal policies; foreign experience in population redistribution policies; and citizen attitudes on population issues.

appendix c

Public Law 91-213
91st Congress, S. 2701
March 16, 1970

AN ACT

To establish a Commission on Population Growth and the American Future.

Commission on Population Growth and the American Future. Establishment.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future is hereby established to conduct and sponsor such studies and research and make such recommendations as may be necessary to provide information and education to all levels of government in the United States, and to our people, regarding a broad range of problems associated with population growth and their implications for America's future.

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMISSION

Sec. 2. (a) The Commission on Population Growth and the American Future (hereinafter referred to as the "Commission") shall be composed of–

(1) two Members of the Senate who shall be members of different political parties and who shall be appointed by the President of the Senate;

(2) two Members of the House of Representatives who shall be members of different political parties and who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

84 STAT. 67

(3) not to exceed twenty members appointed by the President.

84 STAT. 68

(b) The President shall designate one of the members to serve as Chairman and one to serve as Vice Chairman of the Commission.

(c) The majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may conduct hearings.

COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Sec. 3. (a) Members of the Commission who are officers or full-time employees of the United States shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for their services as officers or employees of the United States.

(b) Members of the Commission who are not officers or full-time employees of the United States shall each receive $100 per diem when engaged in the actual performance of duties vested in the Commission.

(c) All members of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by section 5703 of title 5 of the United States Code for persons in the Government service employed intermittently.

80 Stat. 499; 83 Stat. 190.

DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION

Sec. 4. The Commission shall conduct an inquiry into the following aspects of population growth in the United States and its foreseeable social consequences:

(1) the probable course of population growth, internal migration, and related demographic developments between now and the year 2000;

(2) the resources in the public sector of the economy that will be required to deal with the anticipated growth in population;

(3) the ways in which population growth may affect the activities of Federal, State, and local government;

(4) the impact of population growth on environmental pollution and on the depletion of natural resources; and

(5) the various means appropriate to the ethical values and principles of this society by which our Nation can achieve a population level properly suited for its environmental, natural resources, and other needs.

STAFF OF THE COMMISSION

Sec. 5. (a) The Commission shall appoint an Executive Director and such other

personnel as the Commission deems necessary without regard to the provisions of title 5 of the United States Code governing appointments in the competitive service and shall fix the compensation of such personnel without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subtitle II of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates: *Provided*, That no personnel so appointed shall receive compensation in excess of the rate authorized for GS-18 by section 5332 of such title.

80 Stat. 378.
5 USC 101 et seq.
80 Stat. 443, 459.

(b) The Executive Director, with the approval of the Commission, is authorized to obtain services in accordance with the provisions of section 3109 of title 5 of the United States Code, but at rates for individuals not to exceed the per diem equivalent of the rate authorized for GS-18 by section 5332 of such title.

34 F. R. 9605.
5 USC 5332 note.
80 Stat. 416.

(c) The Commission is authorized to enter into contracts with public agencies, private firms, institutions, and individuals for the conduct of research and surveys, the preparation of reports, and other activities necessary to the discharge of its duties.

Contract authority.

84 STAT. 68
84 STAT. 69

GOVERNMENT AGENCY COOPERATION

Sec. 6. The Commission is authorized to request from any Federal department or agency any information and assistance it deems necessary to carry out its functions; and each such department or agency is authorized to cooperate with the Commission and, to the extent permitted by law, to furnish such information and assistance to the Com-

mission upon request made by the Chairman or any other member when acting as Chairman.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Sec. 7. The General Services Administration shall provide administrative services for the Commission on a reimbursable basis.

REPORTS OF COMMISSION: TERMINATION

Sec. 8. In order that the President and the Congress may be kept advised of the progress of its work, the Commission shall, from time to time, report to the President and the Congress such significant findings and recommendations as it deems advisable. The Commission shall submit an interim report to the President and the Congress one year after it is established and shall submit its final report two years after the enactment of this Act. The Commission shall cease to exist sixty days after the date of the submission of its final report.

AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS 84 STAT. 69

Sec. 9. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such amounts as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Approved March 16, 1970.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1971 O - 418-865